

MEDIA RELEASE



24 August 2023

Don't Leave Unpaid Carers Behind

Carers Australia is calling on the government to act now to ensure Australia's carers are not left behind.

The call is in response to the Intergenerational Report released today by Treasurer Jim Chalmers which predicts Australia's care economy will nearly double in the next 40 years.

In 2020, Australia's 2.65 million carers provided nearly 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care, a feat that if paid, would have cost \$77.9 billion to replace.

Whilst paid care and support workers play a vital role in the care economy, it is critical that unpaid carers are appropriately supported and recognised for the responsibility they have in caring, and this recognition must start now.

"Carers are an integral part of Australia's health, mental health, aged care, disability and social services systems," said Alison Brook, CEO of Carers Australia.

"This has been identified by the Aged Care Royal Commission, Disability Royal Commission, Productivity Commission and more. We repeatedly hear from carers who need more help. Many are exhausted and suffer from inadequate recognition and support. We must act now to make sure they are not left behind in the growing care economy.

"The current House of Representatives Inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers must be fully utilised and this recognition must start now."

Today's Intergenerational Report explores how the ballooning cost of the care economy can be attributed to changes in Australia's population demographics over the next 40 years. Findings indicate the cohort of Australians needing support due to aging will grow, increasing the need for care and support. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to acknowledge and appreciate unpaid carers and their role in provision of care to an ever-growing Australian population.

As the population of aging Australians grows, people who take on caring responsibilities for family or friends with disability, mental ill health, or other health conditions, face a higher risk of having to undertake caring responsibilities for more than one person.



Findings from both the 2021 and 2022 Carers Australia's Carer Wellbeing Surveys found the physical and mental health of people caring for more than one person is very concerning. Carers continue to be more than twice as likely as other Australians to have concerning low levels of wellbeing and this likelihood increases for carers who provide care for more than person.

Psychological stress also increases for those providing care to multiple people. Severe psychological distress was reported by 26% of survey respondents who cared for one person and 38% of those caring for two or three people.

In addition to this, carers experience high levels of financial stress, with 50% of people caring for one person reporting financial stress, 68% for those caring for two people and 75% caring for three or more people.

Treasurer Jim Chalmer's himself stated: "Whether it's health care, aged care, disabilities or early childhood education – we'll need more well-trained workers to meet the growing demand for quality care over the next 40 years. The care sector is where the lion's share of opportunities in our economy will be created."

Today we ask him to start recognising the unpaid carers silently, and at great personal cost, contributing towards Australia's economy and our social infrastructures.

About Carers Australia and the National Carer Network

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's carers, advocating to influence policies and services at a national level. The National Carer Network, which consists of Carers NSW, Carers ACT, Carers Victoria, Carers Tasmania, Carers SA, Carers WA, Carers NT, and Carers Queensland, deliver a range of essential carer services across states and territories.

About carers

An informal, unpaid carer is a family member or friend that cares for someone that has a disability, chronic or life-limiting illness, is frail aged, has a mental health illness, alcohol or other drug related issue. Informal carers are distinct from paid support workers who are colloquially also called carers but are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration.

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